

## WILDLIFE INFORMATION ON COYOTES



Many residents of Orange County are expressing concern about coyote sightings and the consequences of predator animals within the urban environment. Several residents have lost their pets to these skilled hunters because many are not aware of recent coyote activity in the area.

Coyotes are found in ALL areas of Orange County. Contrary to popular belief, these animals do not require open space or “wild areas” to survive. In fact, most coyotes within the urban setting are the offspring of generations of coyotes who lived and flourished in the urban areas of Orange County.

Though these animals are far from domesticated, they are very comfortable living in close proximity to human beings. They are frequently seen trotting along within a few feet of joggers and bikers. While not normally a danger to human beings, coyotes will display defensive behaviors if threatened or cornered, therefore, it is important to leave a comfortable distance between you and a coyote.

Small pets can easily become prey. Cats and small dogs should not be allowed outside alone, even in a fenced yard. It is highly recommended that small pets always be accompanied by their owner. Though coyotes generally hunt between sunset and sunrise, they can be observed at all hours of the day and will not pass up the opportunity for an easy meal. A dog or cat left in a backyard can be taken in a matter of moments.

Many steps can be taken to protect you and your property from nuisance animals like coyotes and other wildlife.

As man invades wildlife areas, these animals are pushed out of their homes, cut off from their natural food source and will wander through neighborhoods to occasionally dine on your pet's food if it is left outside. The urbanized coyote is fast becoming the norm rather than the exception. Your trash can, without a secure lid, is especially attractive and a ready source of food. So are your unprotected cats or small dogs.

- Fully fence off animal enclosures, including the top.
- Keep cats and small dogs indoors or in the close presence of an adult.
- Feed pets indoors.
- Store trash in covered heavy-duty containers.
- Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush and weeds.
- Enclose the bottoms of porches and decks.
- Eliminate potential food and water sources, such as fallen fruit and standing water.
- Put away bird feeders at night to avoid attracting rodents and other coyote prey.

- If possible, install motion-sensitive lighting around the house.
- Be aware that coyotes are more active in the spring, when feeding and protecting their young.

If you do encounter a coyote that behaves aggressively, you have probably gotten too close to its prey or its family. Increase the “comfort zone” between you and the coyote. A coyote behaves in a similar way as domestic dogs that are defending their territory and family. Even a fully fenced yard will not keep out a hungry, athletic coyote. These animals are extremely agile and can easily scale any residential fence up to eight feet high. All children should be taught from a very early age that they should avoid strange animals, whether domestic or non-domestic. They should never attempt to feed a wild animal.

Eradication and/or relocation of the urban coyote are not effective. These programs actually provide a vacuum in nature causing these animals to have even larger litters, ultimately increasing the coyote population.

Practicing these defensive measures will minimize the nuisances and losses caused by urban coyotes.

Be sure to bring your cats and small dogs inside at night time and secure your pets against coyotes. Westminster Animal Control emphasizes peaceful co-existence with our indigenous wildlife. If you have any questions regarding how to cope with our wildlife, contact Westminster Animal Control at (714) 548-3201 or visit the California Fish and Game website at [www.keepmewild.org](http://www.keepmewild.org) for downloadable posters, newspaper advertisements and other materials.



*Service with Integrity*

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PRESENTED BY

**THE WESTMINSTER  
POLICE  
DEPARTMENT**

**ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION**